

REMARKS

The above claim amendments are submitted with the following remarks to be fully responsive to the February 13, 2004 Office Action. It is respectfully submitted that this response is timely filed within the three-month shortened statutory period as extended by the request for two month extension of time filed herewith. Reconsideration of all outstanding grounds of objection and rejection and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 5 and 6 are objected to in requiring the replacement of the word “it” within the claim. Although it is submitted that the term was clear and not indefinite as presented, the Examiner’s suggestion has been incorporated in order to overcome the objection of record. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claims 5 and 6 is believed in order and respectfully requested.

As to the claim rejections of record based upon prior art, it is submitted that pending claims 1 - 14, including non-amended independent claim 1 and new independent claims 12 and 13, are allowable over the prior art for at least the reasons set out below.

All of the previously pending claims 1 -12 have been rejected on the base reference to Iwamoto. In particular independent claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (e) as being anticipated by the Iwamoto reference. The Examiner relies upon the drawing in Figure 1 and the general description of the components within columns 3 and 4 as support for a position that Iwamoto discloses attaching a slider to a flexible conductive laminate and electrically connecting the slider and a lead of the laminate before attaching the slider/flexible laminate combination to a suspension. Specifically, in Figure 1, the flexible conductive laminate is illustrated on the flexure 42 and spaced from the load beam 12. The specification as noted by the Examiner describes the components at issue without specific comment on the manner or sequence of assembly.

In response, it is submitted that the Examiner’s interpretation of the reference is not consistent with the disclosure and teachings within the Iwamoto reference and that claim 1 is patentably distinct as presently pending. Importantly, in the Iwamoto reference within the “Brief Description of the Drawings” section, Figure 1 is described as a view of the “assembly juxtaposed with the *flexible conductive laminate conductor shown separated for clarity of illustration*” (emphasis added). That is, Figure 1 is not a disclosure at all of an assembly sequential method or process, but separates the components so that one can see the load beam in its entirety. Moreover, to hold that the drawing provides a suggestion of an assembly sequential

method would be inconsistent with the disclosure of Iwamoto because one of ordinary skill in the art would be clear in the understanding that the drawing is done that way for illustration purposes as expressly stated in the specification so as to preclude other interpretations of what is shown. That is, the drawing is not illustrated that way to suggest something else. Furthermore, the specification at column 3, lines 24 - 27 makes it clear that the flexure and flexible circuit are to be “handled with known manufacturing procedures, including placement and welding.” Without any further recitation of alternative assembly methods or procedures or other prior art references showing known methods, it is submitted that the disclosure of Iwamoto is deficient of any suggestion to create a head/slider circuited gimbal assembly first followed by an attachment of such head/slider circuited gimbal assembly to a suspension. Accordingly, it is submitted that presently pending claim 1 and its dependent claims 2 - 11 are patentable over the Iwamoto reference.

The other cited references including the Pan et al reference and the Schudel do not overcome this basic deficiency of the Iwamoto reference. None of the art of record suggests the attachment of a head slider to a flexible circuit physically and electrically prior to the attachment of the slider/flexible circuit combination to the suspension.

New independent claim 12 further adds that the slider is attached to an insulating layer of the flexible circuit in a similar sequential assembly as in claim 1. Such further distinguishes from the Iwamoto reference in that Iwamoto clearly states that the slider 32 is mounted to the central tongue 38 of the flexure 14. Thus, even in the situation where a flexure (or other element of metal or the like) can be a part a head/slider circuited gimbal assembly as set out in claim 12, the slider of Iwamoto is attached to the metal tongue and not to an insulating layer of a flexible circuit and thus does not anticipate or suggest such. Moreover, regardless of what elements are considered to comprise a head/slider circuited gimbal assembly, the claimed sequential assembly is also deficient as compared to claim 12 in the same manner as to claim 1 above.

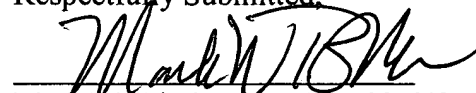
New independent claim 13 is also believed to be patentably over the prior art of record including the Iwamoto reference. Claim 13 sets out the creation of the head/slider circuited gimbal assembly followed by the attachment of such head/slider circuited gimbal assembly to a suspension. Claim 13 differs from claim 1 in that the electrical connection step is not set out in a sequence as compared to the other steps. However, the further step of determining a static attitude of the head/slider circuited gimbal assembly prior to attaching the head/slider circuited gimbal assembly to the suspension is recited. Thus, even if the Pan et al reference suggested

determining static attitude after electrically connecting a slider to a lead, such is immaterial in that claim 13 recites determining the static attitude of a head/slider circuited gimbal assembly before attaching the head/slider circuited gimbal assembly to a suspension, which step itself is absent in either Iwamoto or Pan et al.

Accordingly, it is submitted that presently pending claims 1 - 14 are currently in condition for allowance, a notice of which is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner finds any issue remaining after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, at the Examiner's convenience, in order to expedite any remaining prosecution.

Respectfully Submitted,

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